

PUBLICATION OF REDACTED VERSION
OF THE OEIG FOR THE AGENCIES UNDER THE GOVERNOR
INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

Case # 21-02509

Subject(s): Myles Willingham, Marianella Rivera Rodriguez, Miguel Alcocer Torres,
Grizelda Furlong, and Sabrina Clark

Below is the redacted version of an investigative summary report issued by the Executive Inspector General for the Agencies of the Illinois Governor. Pursuant to section 20-50 of the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act (Act) (5 ILCS 430/20-50), a summary report of an investigation is required to be issued by an executive inspector general when, and only when, at the conclusion of investigation, the executive inspector general determines reasonable cause exists to believe a violation has occurred. If a complaint is not to be filed with the Commission for adjudication of the alleged violation, the Act further requires the executive inspector general to deliver to the Executive Ethics Commission (Commission) a statement setting forth the basis for the decision not to file a complaint and a copy of the summary report of the investigation and of the response from the ultimate jurisdictional authority or agency head regarding the summary report. 5 ILCS 430/20-50(c-5). The Act requires that some summary reports be made available to the public and authorizes the Commission to make others available. 5 ILCS 430/20-52. Before making them available, however, the Commission is to redact from them information that may reveal the identity of witnesses, complainants, or informants and may redact “any other information it believes should not be made public.” 5 ILCS 430/20-52(b).

Some summary reports delivered to the Commission may contain a mix of information relating to allegations with respect to which the executive inspector general did and did not determine reasonable cause existed to believe a violation occurred. In those situations, the Commission may redact information relating to those allegations with respect to which the existence of reasonable cause was not determined.

The Commission exercises its publication responsibility with great caution and seeks to balance the sometimes-competing interests of transparency and fairness to the accused and others uninvolved. To balance these interests, the Commission has redacted certain information contained in this report and identified where said redactions have taken place and inserted clarifying edits as marked. Publication of a summary report of an investigation, whether redacted or not, is made

with the understanding that the subject or subjects of the investigation may not have had the opportunity to rebut the report's factual allegations or legal conclusions before issuance of the report. Moreover, there has not been, nor will there be, an opportunity for the subject to contest or adjudicate them before the Commission. The subject merely has the opportunity to submit a response for publication with the report.

The Commission received this report and a response from the ultimate jurisdictional authority and/or agency in this matter from the Agencies of the Illinois Governor Office of Executive Inspector General ("OEIG"). The Commission, pursuant to 5 ILCS 430/20-52, redacted the OEIG's final report and responses and mailed copies of the redacted version and responses to the Attorney General, the Executive Inspector General for the Agencies of the Illinois Governor, and each subject.

The Commission reviewed all suggestions received and makes this document available pursuant to 5 ILCS 430/20-52. By publishing the below redacted summary report, the Commission neither makes nor adopts any determination of fact or conclusions of law for or against any individual or entity referenced therein.

– THE REDACTED VERSION OF THE EIG'S SUMMARY REPORT
BEGINS ON THE NEXT PAGE –

I. BACKGROUND AND ALLEGATIONS

The Compassionate Use of Medical Cannabis Program Act permits the legal use of cannabis to treat or alleviate the pain and other symptoms associated with a terminal illness or otherwise debilitating medical conditions, such as cancer, multiple sclerosis, and HIV/AIDS.¹ The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is responsible for maintaining a “confidential registry of qualifying patients authorized to engage in the medical use of cannabis and their caregivers.”² IDPH issues registry identification cards to qualifying patients and designated caregivers, which they must present to a licensed dispensary in order to lawfully purchase medical cannabis, and which they are required to have in their possession when engaging in the medical use of cannabis.³

In order to obtain a registry identification card, the patient must submit an application to IDPH that includes a photo of the patient (and designated caregiver, if applicable).⁴ The photo is required to be a current digital passport-size photo, taken against a plain background, in natural color, that provides an unobstructed front view of the full face.⁵ Application materials submitted by patients and caregivers are “subject to all federal privacy laws, are confidential, . . . and are not subject to disclosure to any individual or public or private entity, except as necessary for authorized employees of [IDPH] to perform official duties of [IDPH]”⁶ In addition, data subject to this confidentiality provision “*shall not be used for any purpose not provided by this Part or the [Compassionate Use of Medical Cannabis Program] Act.*”⁷

On July 1, 2021, Myles Willingham became the Division Chief of the IDPH Division of Medical Cannabis. The Office of Executive Inspector General (OEIG) received an anonymous complaint dated December 1, 2021, alleging that Mr. Willingham printed a patient photo and put it in a “Medical Cannabis yearbook,” which contained other patient photos with inappropriate comments. The complaint further alleged that the yearbook was kept in a break area in the IDPH offices.

II. INVESTIGATION

A. Medical Cannabis Application Process

IDPH’s Division of Medical Cannabis is responsible for processing medical cannabis applications. Patients seeking approval to use medical cannabis submit an electronic application, including uploading a photo of themselves into the electronic Illinois Cannabis Tracking System. Division of Medical Cannabis Public Health Program Specialists (also referred to as Processors)⁸ are responsible for reviewing the applications, and verifying that all required documentation is

¹ See 410 ILCS 130, *et seq.*; 77 Ill. Admin. Code § 946.

² 410 ILCS 130/15(a).

³ 410 ILCS 130/60 &-70.

⁴ 77 Ill. Admin. Code § 946.200(d).

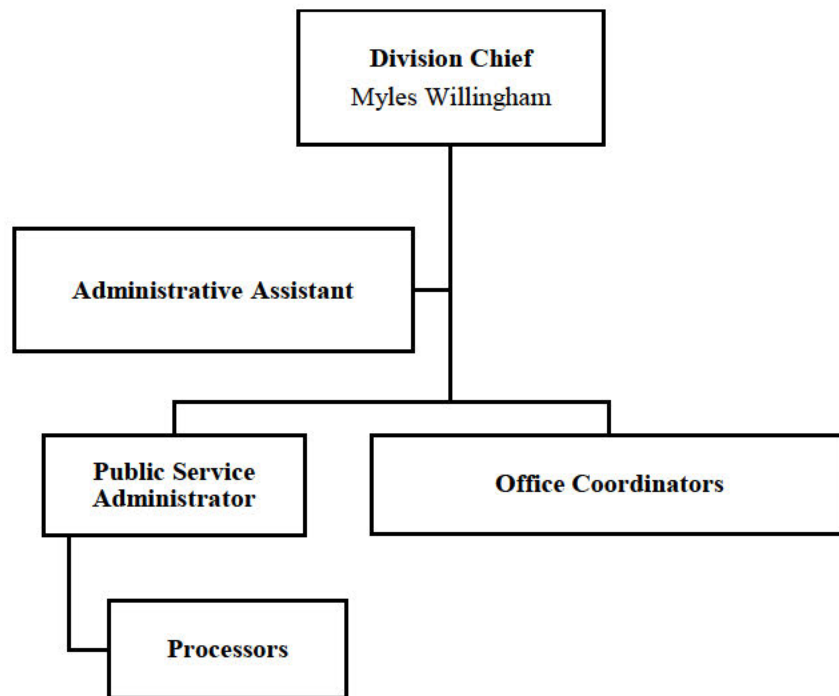
⁵ *Id.*

⁶ 77 Ill. Admin. Code § 946.60(a).

⁷ 77 Ill. Admin. Code § 946.60(c) (emphasis in original).

⁸ This report refers to individuals in this position as “Processors.”

attached in the system. If an application does not include the required documentation, including when a photo does not meet the required criteria, a Processor sends a deficiency letter to the patient with instructions to correct the deficiency. Division of Medical Cannabis Office Coordinators are responsible for responding to calls and emails related to patient registration for medical cannabis, and assisting patients in navigating the medical cannabis application process. As reflected in the organizational chart below, Mr. Willingham directly oversees the Office Coordinators and an Administrative Assistant, and indirectly oversees the Processors:



The Division of Medical Cannabis offices are located on the third floor of IDPH's Springfield headquarters at 535 West Jefferson, along with at least one other IDPH division. The offices on the floor are accessed through a secure door that requires a badge for entry, and a number of the Medical Cannabis Division staff work in cubicles.

B. The "MCPY YEARBOOK"

As an initial step in the investigation, OEIG investigators met with Mr. Willingham in his office at the Division of Medical Cannabis, and during the meeting, the OEIG requested and secured from him a binder with the IDPH Illinois Medical Cannabis Patient Program logo and the label "MCPY YEARBOOK" on the cover.⁹ The "MCPY YEARBOOK" contains 13 pages, including 8 pages with images of people's faces. Most of the pages with images of people also have typed captions, including:

- an image of a person in front of a [redacted] with the caption, "Punta Cannabis";
- an image of a person with [redacted], and the captions, "Medical Cannabis Photo Gallery" and "Happy Holiday";

⁹ The OEIG's interview of Mr. Willingham is discussed in greater detail below.

- an image of a man wearing a [redacted] with [redacted] on his [redacted], with the caption, “Pete Davidson from Wish”;
- the [redacted] image of a person with the caption, “Why the Long face?”;
- an image of a man with a [redacted] with the caption, “ZADDY CLAUS”; and
- an image of a person with the caption, “HAPPY DAZE.”

Other pages with images of people without captions include:

- a screenshot of a man in a [redacted] from a [redacted]; and
- a photo of a man in a [redacted] with the word “Heroes” in the background.

The pages without images of people include:

- a blank photo with an error message;
- images of a car with the caption, “Lightning McQueen ‘KA-CHOW’”;
- an image of a jar and cannabis with the caption, “I AM WHAT I SMOKE”; and
- images of broken smoking paraphernalia with the caption, “*In loving memory of Pvt Bubbler R.I.P. 02/05/2019 09/22/2021.*”

After the OEIG obtained the “MCPD YEARBOOK” from Mr. Willingham, investigators interviewed a number of Division of Medical Cannabis employees regarding the creation of the yearbook, and their knowledge and use of it. The employees interviewed included Office Coordinators, a Processor, and an Administrative Assistant.

C. Interviews of IDPH Division of Medical Cannabis Staff

1. [IDPH Employee 1]

The OEIG interviewed [IDPH Employee 1] on February 18, 2022. She said she had been an IDPH Office Coordinator for approximately [redacted] at the time of her interview. When shown a copy of the “MCPD YEARBOOK” during her interview, [IDPH Employee 1] said it was kept in a makeshift break area behind her cubicle. She said that during her first week or two at IDPH, Mr. Willingham showed her a picture he had printed, and that after he showed it to her she thought he walked to the break area. [IDPH Employee 1] identified the page in the yearbook with the image of a person and “HAPPY DAZE” printed on it as the picture Mr. Willingham showed her, and confirmed that “HAPPY DAZE” was printed on it when he showed it to her. She said that Mr. Willingham told her that the yearbook was a book of patients who submitted photos that were not acceptable for their patient registration.

[IDPH Employee 1] also recalled that close to when she began working at IDPH, she saw Office Coordinator Miguel Alcocer Torres print a picture and take it around the corner to the break area next to her desk. However, she said she did not recall what the picture showed. [IDPH Employee 1] said she has never added anything to the yearbook or looked through it.

2. [IDPH Employee 2]

On April 21, 2022, the OEIG interviewed [IDPH Employee 2], who said she has been a Processor in the Division of Medical Cannabis for [redacted]. When shown a copy of the “MCPD

YEARBOOK” during her interview, [IDPH Employee 2] said she first saw it in the fall of 2021. She explained that towards the end of a regular Wednesday meeting attended by the entire office, Office Coordinator Marianella Rivera Rodriguez retrieved the yearbook from her desk and showed it around, because she thought it was funny. [IDPH Employee 2] said she told Ms. Rivera Rodriguez that people could get in trouble because of privacy concerns, and Ms. Rivera Rodriguez responded that Mr. Willingham knew about the yearbook and that it was his idea. She said that she heard Ms. Rivera Rodriguez say the photos were taken from patient applications. [IDPH Employee 2] said this meeting was the first time she saw the yearbook, and added that prior to that meeting the previous supervisors would have been there and would not have allowed it.

[IDPH Employee 2] identified six of the pages in the “MCPH YEARBOOK” that she said she had seen in the yearbook before. [IDPH Employee 2] identified the page of the yearbook that is a screenshot of a man in [redacted] from a [Redacted], and said she heard Mr. Willingham talking to Office Coordinators about someone taking a screenshot from [Redacted], and saying that he was putting it in the binder. In addition, [IDPH Employee 2] recalled that on one occasion, Mr. Willingham said that a picture of a dog should go in the yearbook. However, she said she did not see him or anyone putting any material in the yearbook. When asked whether Mr. Willingham was aware of the yearbook, [IDPH Employee 2] responded, “oh yeah, the whole office is.”

[IDPH Employee 2] said Ms. Rivera Rodriguez initially kept the yearbook at her desk, and that it was placed in the break area in fall or early winter 2021. [IDPH Employee 2] said that everybody in the office was aware of the yearbook, but no one said it was improper. [IDPH Employee 2] denied that she ever put materials or comments in it, or showed it to anyone.

[IDPH Employee 2] said she felt it was wrong to have the yearbook because the patients are trying to receive help, and that she raised the issue in a supervisor assessment questionnaire. [IDPH Employee 2] said she worked remotely in 2021 other than some days when she was in the office for training, and that the yearbook was gone when she came back to work in the office in March 2022.

3. Former [IDPH Employee 3]

Investigators interviewed former [IDPH Employee 3] on February 17, 2022. [IDPH Employee 3] said she briefly worked as an Office Coordinator at IDPH for approximately 20 days in [redacted], when she was trained to staff a medical cannabis help desk line.¹⁰ When shown a copy of the “MCPH YEARBOOK” during her interview, [IDPH Employee 3] said she had seen it in a break area on the other side of her IDPH cubicle, and did not recall that it was ever put away. She added that during her onboarding at IDPH, Administrative Assistant Grace Furlong walked her around the office space and told her that if she ([IDPH Employee 3]) ever had time, she could look through the yearbook. [IDPH Employee 3] said she did not look in it, or see anyone putting anything in it. She said that the break area is accessible to Office Coordinators and Processors, as well as anyone else with an IDPH badge, and said that she saw a janitor in the division every day.

4. [IDPH Employee 4]

¹⁰ [IDPH Employee 3] said she has otherwise worked as an [Redacted] at the [Redacted] since [Redacted].

On February 18, 2022, investigators interviewed [IDPH Employee 4], who said that she had been an Office Coordinator in the Division of Medical Cannabis since [Redacted]. [IDPH Employee 4] said she saw the “MCPP YEARBOOK” on a table in the break area on her first day of work. She explained that Ms. Furlong showed her around the building on her first day, including the break area, and mentioned “this is our yearbook.” [IDPH Employee 4] said that Ms. Furlong explained that when an applicant sent in a photo that was odd or unusual, the Processor would print it and put it in the yearbook. She said Ms. Furlong did not open the “MCPP YEARBOOK” at that time.

[IDPH Employee 4] said she first looked at the yearbook a couple of days after she started work at the Division of Medical Cannabis, and that the last time she looked at it was in approximately November 2021. When shown the “MCPP YEARBOOK” during her interview, she identified six pages that she said she had seen before, including the image of a person in front of a [redacted] with the caption, “Punta Cannabis.”

[IDPH Employee 4] said she was bothered by the yearbook, and that she was particularly bothered by the “Punta Cannabis” page because she recognized the person in the photo as a patient in a case she had worked on. She said the patient had a [redacted], and that he was transitioning from being [redacted]. [IDPH Employee 4] recalled that she worked with the patient’s mother on his application and that the mother had sent in the photo in approximately early [Redacted]. [IDPH Employee 4] said that Ms. Rivera Rodriguez was handling the application corrections and thought the photo was funny. [IDPH Employee 4] said that she did not say anything about the situation because she was still in her probationary period and did not want to “rock the boat.”

[IDPH Employee 4] said she has heard employees saying things like, “oh, this is an interesting one, I should put this in the book,” or, “this one’s funny, let’s put this one in the book,” but that she never saw anyone place anything in the yearbook. She said that Mr. Alcocer Torres sits near her, and recalled that in approximately her first month of employment he mentioned that someone had submitted a picture of “paraphernalia,” and that he said he was going to print it and put it in the yearbook. In addition, she said Office Coordinator Sabrina Clark put something into the yearbook, and recalled that Ms. Clark talked about the Santa Claus picture in approximately late November 2021. She said that in approximately mid-December or around Christmastime she heard Ms. Rivera Rodriguez and Ms. Clark talking about the photo involving a Pete Davidson comparison. [IDPH Employee 4] said she did not know who created the “MCPP YEARBOOK,” and that she did not see anyone putting anything in it. She also denied putting anything in the yearbook herself.

[IDPH Employee 4] said the “MCPP YEARBOOK” remained on a table in the break area, including after hours, on the weekends, and on holidays. She said the office space requires a badge to enter, but that the yearbook would be accessible to anyone on the floor. She said she never heard anyone say the yearbook was improper, or take any action about it, and that she did not recall Mr. Willingham making any statements about taking the yearbook. [IDPH Employee 4] said she did not notice that the yearbook was gone from the break area until the week prior to her OEIG

interview, when she overheard Ms. Furlong telling Mr. Alcocer Torres that the OEIG was doing an investigation about the yearbook and had taken it.¹¹

D. Interviews of Identified “MCPP YEARBOOK” Participants

1. Administrative Assistant Grizelda (Grace) Furlong

Investigators interviewed Administrative Assistant Grizelda (Grace) Furlong on March 2, 2022. She said she has been an Administrative Assistant in the Division of Medical Cannabis for a little over a year, and that prior to that she was an Office Coordinator in the division for four years. She said she reports to Mr. Willingham.

When shown a copy of the “MCPP YEARBOOK” during her interview, Ms. Furlong said that it was kept in the Division of Medical Cannabis break area on the third floor. She initially stated that she “rarely” looked at it, then clarified that she had seen some of the pictures in it although she said she never paid it much attention. Ms. Furlong first said that a female Processor showed her the image of paraphernalia, in printed form, but that it was not in the yearbook at that time and did not have any caption. Later in the interview, Ms. Furlong said Ms. Rivera Rodriguez, an intern, or she herself had the photo on their computer screen. She subsequently said she assumed Ms. Rivera Rodriguez printed it, because that was who showed her the printed photo.¹² Ms. Furlong said she had also seen a printout of the [redacted] image of a person when it was shown around the office, but said it was not in the yearbook and it did not contain the typed caption, “Why the Long face?” when she saw it.

Ms. Furlong said that Mr. Willingham created the break area in mid- to late August 2021, and that the “MCPP YEARBOOK” showed up in the area around that time. Ms. Furlong said she believed Ms. Rivera Rodriguez created the yearbook because Ms. Rivera Rodriguez asked her for an extra binder around the time she (Ms. Furlong), Ms. Rivera Rodriguez, Mr. Alcocer Torres, and some temporary employees were discussing how they were amazed by the photos that people sent in, and how they were perfect examples of what not to approve. Ms. Furlong also said that only she, Ms. Rivera Rodriguez, Mr. Willingham, and the nurse manager have access to the .pdf version of the Medical Cannabis Patient Program logo, and so she believed Ms. Rivera Rodriguez made the yearbook cover that contains the logo. She said she had the impression that the yearbook was created in jest, and said that the captions are not related to any official duties.

Ms. Furlong said she has access to the electronic system used for patient applications, but maintained that she did not put any of the photos in the “MCPP YEARBOOK,” and that she never saw anyone else put anything in it. She said she assumed that Ms. Rivera Rodriguez and Mr. Alcocer Torres maintained the yearbook, but said she did not know why. Ms. Furlong said she assumed the pictures in the yearbook were photos from patient applications because there had been conversations about printing deficient photos from patient applications. She said she sometimes would hear offhand comments about photos being “good for the binder,” or when someone would say, “come look at this one,” but said she did not track if people were putting photos in the

¹¹ As discussed further below, the OEIG interviewed Mr. Alcocer Torres the day before [IDPH Employee 4]’ interview, and interviewed Ms. Furlong nearly two weeks after [IDPH Employee 4]’ interview.

¹² As noted below, Ms. Rivera Rodriguez is an Office Coordinator.

yearbook. Ms. Furlong said that on one occasion she printed a photo of someone wearing a [redacted], [redacted], and a [redacted], and gave it to Ms. Rivera Rodriguez to put in the yearbook (without a caption), but she said that photo was not in the “MCPP YEARBOOK.”

When asked whether she had showed the “MCPP YEARBOOK” to anyone, Ms. Furlong said that she had not shown it to anyone outside of the office, and added that the only time she showed it to anyone was when she walked them back to the break area. She said that [IDPH Employee 1] asked what it was when she ([IDPH Employee 1]) was new and that Ms. Furlong responded that it was a binder of photos of what not to approve. Ms. Furlong said it was possible she also mentioned it to others, but she denied that she ever told anyone about the yearbook other than when she was asked about it, and denied that she encouraged anyone to check it out. Ms. Furlong then said that she did not really remember, because the yearbook was so “benign.”

Ms. Furlong said that everyone in the office knew the “MCPP YEARBOOK” was there. She said it sat out on the table in the break area all the time, including after hours and on weekends, and that she never saw anyone put it away. Ms. Furlong said that employees are required to use their badges to access the third floor, and that the break area is accessible to anyone with access to the third floor. Ms. Furlong said she saw a janitor on the floor every afternoon, and added that the janitor works for the building owner rather than the State. She said she had not seen Mr. Willingham doing anything with the yearbook but believed he was aware of it because he would straighten up the break area, and could see it lying on the table just as she had. Ms. Furlong said the “MCPP YEARBOOK” was not mentioned in any office meetings, but that she noticed it was gone from the break area about a month before her interview.

2. Office Coordinator Miguel Alcocer Torres

On February 17, 2022, investigators interviewed Miguel Alcocer Torres, who said he has been an IDPH Office Coordinator for four years and reports to Mr. Willingham. When shown a copy of the “MCPP YEARBOOK” during his interview, Mr. Alcocer Torres said he first saw it in early 2021 (perhaps March or April). Mr. Alcocer Torres said he had seen each of the images in the yearbook, and that he believes they are patient application photos. He noted that the page of the yearbook with the image of a jar and cannabis with the typed caption, “I AM WHAT I SMOKE,” reflects “Printer Friendly Format” and “Rotate Photo” buttons, which he said are part of the system screens used to upload patient photos. However, he denied printing any of the pictures or placing any items or captions in the yearbook. Mr. Alcocer Torres maintained that he had “no idea” who created the yearbook, and said he has never seen anyone put pictures in it. He said that he did not know who put the captions on the pictures, and maintained that the yearbook just “showed up” with the captions already there.

Mr. Alcocer Torres said that the yearbook was left out on a table in an open break area, including overnight and on weekends, and that everyone in the office was likely aware of it because it was “out in the open.” He said that anyone who came through the secure door to the Medical Cannabis and Epidemiology offices could see the yearbook, including janitorial and maintenance staff. He said he was not aware of any official use for the yearbook.

Mr. Alcocer Torres said that the “MCPD YEARBOOK” disappeared from the break area two to three months earlier. He said that during a weekly Wednesday staff meeting attended by Office Coordinators, Processors, an assistant, and the managers, the yearbook was mentioned as a concern, and Mr. Willingham mentioned that he (Mr. Willingham) had removed the yearbook because he had received feedback from a coworker that it was not a good idea.

3. Former Temporary Office Coordinator Sabrina Clark

Investigators interviewed Sabrina Clark on March 18, 2022. She said she worked at IDPH as an Office Coordinator from May through December 2021, through a temporary staffing agency. When shown a copy of the “MCPD YEARBOOK” during her interview, Ms. Clark said that she, Ms. Rivera Rodriguez, and a temporary employee whose first name was [IDPH Employee 5] created it. She said it was created “a tiny bit after” the departure of the former Deputy Division Chief.¹³ Ms. Clark said she recalled a conversation about “let’s lighten up the mood in here,” and said that Ms. Rivera Rodriguez or [IDPH Employee 5] obtained a binder and people started adding photos to it. She said she did not know who made the cover for the binder, but noted that Ms. Rivera Rodriguez was in charge of the division’s logo.

Ms. Clark said she thought she added the photo of a man in a [redacted] with the word “Heroes” in the background to the yearbook, and said she got it from an email in which a patient was submitting a photo. She recalled that she thought it was a “silly little thing,” and that it had a “Pastor vibe.” Ms. Clark also identified three other pages in the yearbook that she recognized or said looked familiar, including the image of a man with a [redacted] with the caption “ZADDY CLAUS,” but said she did not add those pages to the yearbook, and that she did not put any comments in it. Ms. Clark said that Ms. Rivera Rodriguez contributed to the yearbook, but that she did not know if Mr. Alcocer Torres did so. She said the images in the yearbook were obtained through patient emails, and that the yearbook was not related in any way to official IDPH duties.

Ms. Clark recalled that on one occasion a few weeks after Mr. Willingham started working at IDPH, she, Mr. Willingham, and Ms. Rivera Rodriguez laughed at the “ZADDY CLAUS” phrase, and that Mr. Willingham made a funny comment or said something funny about the image of the man with a [redacted]. However, she said she did not recall how that caption was added to the image. Ms. Clark said she did not see Mr. Willingham print or add anything to the yearbook and that she did not recall Mr. Willingham doing anything with the yearbook. Ms. Clark said the yearbook was kept in an area near the back windows, or in the break area, and that she assumed that everyone in the office knew about it.

Ms. Clark recalled that at the end of an in-person office meeting about program updates, a [IDPH Employee 6] made a comment that the yearbook was “weird” and “inappropriate.” Ms. Clark said Mr. Willingham, Ms. Furlong, and all of the Processors and Coordinators attended the meeting, and that she thought it was prior to the holidays when it was not yet cold outside. She said someone, possibly Ms. Rivera Rodriguez, responded that it was for “office humor,” and that no one else said it should not be done anymore or otherwise responded and so the response seemed

¹³ A Central Management Services Personnel History inquiry reflects that individual was a Senior Public Service Administrator in IDPH’s Medical Cannabis Division until [Redacted].

acceptable. Ms. Clark said she did not recall anyone removing the yearbook, but that she did not recall seeing it in the break area at a potluck event just before the holidays.

4. Office Coordinator Marianella Rivera Rodriguez

On April 21, 2022, investigators interviewed Marianella Rivera Rodriguez, who said she has been an Office Coordinator at IDPH for approximately two years and two months and reports to Mr. Willingham. When shown a copy of the “MCPD YEARBOOK” during her interview, Ms. Rivera Rodriguez said that she printed the image of a person in front of a [redacted] and added it to the yearbook, and that she added the caption “Punta Cannabis.” She said she also added the image of a jar and cannabis with the typed caption, “I AM WHAT I SMOKE” to the yearbook. Ms. Rivera Rodriguez said she printed the pictures from patient applications. She said she was familiar with eight other pages in the yearbook as well, but maintained she did not know who added them. Ms. Rivera Rodriguez said the purpose of the yearbook was to be funny.

Ms. Rivera Rodriguez said she did not know who created the yearbook, and said she did not recall if she had any input regarding its creation. She said the idea for it came from a prior Division Chief, who mentioned it to the Office Coordinators, but that she did not recall when that occurred. Ms. Rivera Rodriguez said she thought everyone put something in the yearbook at some point, but that she has never seen anyone else doing so. She also said she had not seen anyone putting comments on the images in the yearbook. She said she created the logo for the Medical Cannabis Program, but that she did not know who put the logo on the cover of the yearbook.

Ms. Rivera Rodriguez said the yearbook was kept on the breakroom table at the front of the office. She said it was kept out after hours and on weekends, and that it was there for a little over a year. She said that everyone in the office was aware of it. She said that she has shown the yearbook to new Processors and Office Coordinators as they come in, because it contained funny patient pictures. Ms. Rivera Rodriguez said she never showed the yearbook at a Wednesday meeting, and denied that she kept it at her desk, but confirmed that [IDPH Employee 2] said they could get in trouble for printing patient photos in the yearbook.

Ms. Rivera Rodriguez said she showed the “MCPD YEARBOOK” to Mr. Willingham when she added the image of the jar and cannabis with the caption, “I AM WHAT I SMOKE.” She said she did not recall what he said when she showed it to him, and that she did not think he really paid attention. She said she has not seen Mr. Willingham printing pictures for the yearbook, or putting pictures or comments in it. She said Mr. Willingham removed it, but that she did not know when.

5. Division Chief Myles Willingham

On February 8, 2022, at the beginning of the investigation, OEIG investigators interviewed Mr. Willingham in his IDPH office in Springfield. Mr. Willingham said that as Division Chief, he is responsible for managing the medical cannabis program.

Mr. Willingham said he was familiar with the “MCPD YEARBOOK,” and, at the investigators’ request, produced it from a drawer in his desk during the interview. Mr. Willingham

said that the yearbook had been in the break area in the IDPH office, including at night. Mr. Willingham initially said he had seen the yearbook, but had not looked into it and did not understand its content. However, later in the interview he said he recalled that someone had shown him a stock photo of cannabis with the comment “I AM WHAT I SMOKE,” and a photo of a “broken bong” with the caption R.I.P., but said he did not recall who showed him those photos. Mr. Willingham said that the third-floor office space is a secured area, but that anyone in the Medical Cannabis Division could access the break area where the yearbook had been located, and that he believed that there is a janitor for the floor.

Mr. Willingham said he did not know when the yearbook was created, and when asked whose idea it was to create it he replied, “I didn’t ask.” He also denied that he contributed to it. He said that the Office Coordinators who worked in the division were aware of the yearbook and had put items into it. Mr. Willingham said that the yearbook was created because people sent in “ridiculous” photos with their medical cannabis applications, which did not meet the photo requirements. He said the yearbook was made “in jest,” and that there was no official use for it. Mr. Willingham said that a couple of weeks before his interview he was cleaning up in the break area and decided to look through the yearbook at the “silly photos,” and when he did, he discovered patient photos he felt were inappropriate, so he confiscated it.

III. ANALYSIS

The State of Illinois Code of Personal Conduct provides that while serving in their official capacity, each State employee “has a responsibility to the people of the State of Illinois to act with integrity and to treat the people we serve . . . with dignity and respect.”¹⁴ In addition, the materials patients submit to IDPH in their medical cannabis applications are confidential, and may not be used for purposes other than as provided in the Compassionate Use of Medical Cannabis Program Act and corresponding rules.¹⁵

The employees in IDPH’s Division of Medical Cannabis are charged with processing confidential applications from people who are terminally ill or suffer from other debilitating medical conditions. Contrary to the Code of Personal Conduct and applicable regulations, a group of Medical Cannabis Division employees contributed to and promoted a collection of patient photos with demeaning captions, resulting in the mockery of the patients they serve. Even more troubling, Division Chief Myles Willingham, who is responsible for overseeing the division, participated in and condoned these actions.

All of the Division of Medical Cannabis employees interviewed in the investigation, including a Processor, consistently stated that the photos contained in the “MCPY YEARBOOK” were printed from medical cannabis applications submitted by patients. In addition, the evidence clearly showed that the “MCPY YEARBOOK” was not used for any official business. To the contrary, staff used the photos to make fun and for their personal enjoyment.

¹⁴ https://www2.illinois.gov/cms/personnel/employeeresources/Documents/SOI_Code_Personal_Conduct.pdf (rev. Mar. 17, 2021) (last visited May 27, 2022).

¹⁵ See 77 Ill. Admin. Code § 946.60(c).

The “MCPY YEARBOOK” was maintained for an extended period of time in an open area of the Division of Medical Cannabis office space, where it was accessible to anyone who may have worked on or visited the floor. Ms. Clark said she helped create it “a tiny bit after” the former Deputy Division Chief left at the end of July 2021, which was consistent with Ms. Furlong’s statement that it appeared shortly after Mr. Willingham created the break area in August 2021. Mr. Willingham said he removed the yearbook from the break area a couple of weeks before his February 8, 2022 interview, meaning that it was on display in the Division of Medical Cannabis office space for approximately five months. During this time, it was also accessible to non-Medical Cannabis employees, as it was kept out on a table in the open break area around the clock, including after hours and on weekends, where it could be viewed by the building’s janitorial staff and anyone else on the floor.

The pervasively cavalier attitude employees displayed toward patient photos set a tone in the division that encouraged the misconduct to continue. New employees were introduced to the “MCPY YEARBOOK” early in their employment with the division, and even as part of their onboarding. In addition, it served as an ongoing source of entertainment for the employees, as they regularly talked in the open cubicle office space about seeing patient photos that they believed might be funny enough to contribute. Those that participated in activities related to the yearbook attempted to minimize or downplay their conduct, as evidenced by their characterizations of the yearbook as “benign” and intended simply to “lighten up the mood,” for “jest,” and to be funny. Indeed, even when an employee raised an issue with the yearbook in a division-wide meeting, the response was only that it was for “office humor,” making it seem acceptable to others. The fact that employees did not recognize and appreciate the problem with this improper behavior also worked to perpetuate and expand the misconduct.

For the reasons set forth below, there is reasonable cause to believe, at minimum, the following individuals participated in, contributed to, or promoted the inappropriate use of the “MCPY YEARBOOK,” amounting to conduct unbecoming in violation of the State of Illinois Code of Personal Conduct.

Office Coordinator Marianella Rivera Rodriguez

Office Coordinator Marianella Rivera Rodriguez contributed photos from patient applications to the “MCPY YEARBOOK,” showed the yearbook to others, and may have been involved in creating it. Although Ms. Rivera Rodriguez maintained that she did not know who initially created the yearbook, she admitted to contributing photos printed from patient applications to it, including the image of a person in front of a [redacted] with the caption “Punta Cannabis,” and the image of a jar and cannabis with the caption, “I AM WHAT I SMOKE.” In addition, Ms. Rivera Rodriguez admitted to showing the yearbook to new employees because she thought it was funny, and [IDPH Employee 2] recalled that Ms. Rivera Rodriguez showed it around at the end of an office-wide meeting. Ms. Furlong said she believed Ms. Rivera Rodriguez created the “MCPY YEARBOOK,” because Ms. Rivera Rodriguez asked her for an extra binder around the time they discussed being amazed by the photos that people submitted.

Office Coordinator Miguel Alcocer Torres

Office Coordinator Miguel Alcocer Torres contributed at least one photo from a patient application to the “MCPP YEARBOOK.” While Mr. Alcocer Torres claimed to have “no idea” who initially created the yearbook, stating that it just “showed up,” and denied contributing any items to it, [IDPH Employee 4] said she heard Mr. Alcocer Torres say that he was going to print a picture of paraphernalia that had been submitted as part of an application, and that he was going to put it in the yearbook. Consistent with [IDPH Employee 4]’ account, the “MCPP YEARBOOK” contained an image of smoking paraphernalia. In addition, [IDPH Employee 1] said she saw Mr. Alcocer Torres print a picture and take it around the corner to the break area next to her desk. Mr. Willingham also said that the Office Coordinators who worked in the division were aware of the yearbook and had put items into it.

Administrative Assistant Grace Furlong

Administrative Assistant Grace Furlong showed new employees the “MCPP YEARBOOK,” and encouraged them to look at it. Both [IDPH Employee 4] and [IDPH Employee 3] consistently described how Ms. Furlong pointed out the “MCPP YEARBOOK” to them during their onboarding when Ms. Furlong showed them around on their first day of work in the Division of Medical Cannabis, and [IDPH Employee 3] said Ms. Furlong invited her to look through it when she had time. [IDPH Employee 4] said Ms. Furlong told her that the photos in it were printed from applications. Although Ms. Furlong denied that she ever told anyone about the yearbook other than when she was asked about it, and denied that she encouraged anyone to check it out, she did admit that she showed it to people when she walked them back to the break area and they asked what it was, albeit she also claimed that she only responded that it was a binder of photos of what not to approve. Ms. Furlong also said that she printed a photo and gave it to Ms. Rivera Rodriguez to put in the yearbook, although she said that photo did not end up being in the “MCPP YEARBOOK.”

Temporary Office Coordinator Sabrina Clark

Temporary Office Coordinator Sabrina Clark admitted to helping create the “MCPP YEARBOOK.” She also admitted to contributing the photo of a man in a [redacted] with the word “Heroes” in the background to the yearbook, and that the photo had been submitted in a patient application.

Division Chief Myles Willingham

The conduct of Division Chief Myles Willingham, who was responsible for overseeing the division, is especially problematic. The evidence showed that Mr. Willingham was aware of the “MCPP YEARBOOK” and participated in the dissemination and mockery of the patient photo submissions.

Staff interviewed consistently said that “everyone” was aware of the yearbook. More specifically, according to [IDPH Employee 2], when she questioned whether the yearbook was appropriate, Ms. Rivera Rodriguez told her that Mr. Willingham knew about the yearbook and that it was his idea. During [IDPH Employee 1]’s first week or two at IDPH, Mr. Willingham showed her a printed patient picture and explained to her that the yearbook was a book of patient photos

that were not acceptable for their patient registration. In addition, Ms. Clark recalled an occasion shortly after Mr. Willingham started working at IDPH, when he laughed with her and Ms. Rivera Rodriguez about the phrase “ZADDY CLAUS,” and said something funny about the image of the man with a [redacted], clearly a reference to a photo and caption that was part of the “MCPY YEARBOOK.” [IDPH Employee 1] said that Mr. Willingham showed her the image of a person with the caption “HAPPY DAZE,” and then walked to the break area where the “MCPY YEARBOOK” was kept. [IDPH Employee 2] also recalled hearing Mr. Willingham say that someone had submitted a [redacted], and that he was putting it in the binder. Both the “HAPPY DAZE” image and a screenshot of a man in a [redacted] from a [Redacted] were in the “MCPY YEARBOOK” when OEIG investigators obtained possession of it from Mr. Willingham. This evidence demonstrates that Mr. Willingham was aware of the yearbook, understood its purpose, and participated in its compilation and viewing in an open area of the office that lasted for months.

Beyond Mr. Willingham’s inappropriate conduct relating to the existence of the “MCPY YEARBOOK,” his attempt to distance himself from this conduct in his OEIG interview is disconcerting. When asked about his knowledge of the “MCPY YEARBOOK,” Mr. Willingham said that he knew it existed but he had not looked at it and did not “understand” its content. He suggested that it was not until a couple of weeks before his February OEIG interview that he finally looked at it and then determined the yearbook should be removed. This does not comport with the statements of IDPH staff. His joking with staff, showing staff pictures, and commenting on those pictures and captions, belies his statements of “not understanding” what was in the yearbook. Furthermore, Mr. Willingham did not remove the yearbook from the open break area when he was joking and engaging with staff about the yearbook. It was only in late January—which was after the OEIG received a complaint and initiated its investigation—when Mr. Willingham claimed he determined it would be better to put the yearbook in his office.

Mr. Willingham, as the division head, is responsible for promoting a professional working environment that ensures State employees are acting with integrity and treating those whom IDPH serves with dignity and respect. Not only did Mr. Willingham fail to take any action to curtail this inappropriate behavior for approximately five months, he affirmatively participated in it. This conduct from a division head sends a strong message to employees that such offensive behavior is acceptable, and encourages its continuance. Mr. Willingham’s failure to take timely, appropriate action relating to the “MCPY YEARBOOK” constitutes mismanagement.

The OEIG concludes that there is reasonable cause to believe that by contributing to or promoting the “MCPY YEARBOOK,” at minimum, Ms. Rivera Rodriguez, Mr. Alcocer Torres, Ms. Furlong, Ms. Clark,¹⁶ and Mr. Willingham violated the State of Illinois Code of Personal Conduct. In addition, by adding patient photos to the yearbook, Ms. Rivera Rodriguez, Mr. Alcocer Torres, Ms. Clark, and Mr. Willingham used patient application materials for a purpose unrelated to the Compassionate Use of Medical Cannabis Program, in violation of administrative

¹⁶ Although Ms. Clark was employed at IDPH through a temporary agency, the OEIG has jurisdiction over vendors and others doing business with IDPH. See 5 ILCS 430/20-10(c). In addition, the Code of Personal Conduct applies to all “employees (including without limitation full-time, part-time, and contractual employees), . . . and persons holding similar positions . . . in any office, department, agency, board, commission, or authority of the Executive Branch of the State of Illinois under the jurisdiction of the Governor for the purposes of Section 20-10(c) of the Ethics Act” https://www2.illinois.gov/cms/personnel/employeeresources/Documents/SOI_Code_Personal_Conduct.pdf (rev. Mar. 17, 2021) (last visited May 27, 2022).

rules applicable to the program. Finally, Mr. Willingham mismanaged the Division of Medical Cannabis by knowing this inappropriate conduct was taking place, participating in it, and condoning, if not encouraging, its continuance for months. Therefore, these allegations are [REDACTED].¹⁷

IV. [REDACTED] AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of its investigation, the OEIG concludes that there is **REASONABLE CAUSE TO ISSUE THE FOLLOWING [REDACTED]**:

- [REDACTED] – Office Coordinator Marianella Rivera Rodriguez violated administrative rules applicable to the Compassionate Use of Medical Cannabis Program, and violated the State of Illinois Code of Personal Conduct.
- [REDACTED] – Office Coordinator Miguel Alcocer Torres violated administrative rules applicable to the Compassionate Use of Medical Cannabis Program, and violated the State of Illinois Code of Personal Conduct.
- [REDACTED] – Administrative Assistant Grace Furlong violated the State of Illinois Code of Personal Conduct.
- [REDACTED] – Temporary Office Coordinator Sabrina Clark violated administrative rules applicable to the Compassionate Use of Medical Cannabis Program, and violated the State of Illinois Code of Personal Conduct.
- [REDACTED] – Division Chief Myles Willingham violated administrative rules applicable to the Compassionate Use of Medical Cannabis Program, violated the State of Illinois Code of Personal Conduct, and mismanaged the Division of Medical Cannabis.

The OEIG recommends that IDPH take disciplinary action it deems appropriate relating to Ms. Rivera Rodriguez, Mr. Alcocer Torres, and Ms. Furlong. The OEIG also recommends, if IDPH determines that any additional employees were engaged in similar misconduct regarding the “MCPH YEARBOOK,” IDPH impose similar disciplinary action. Because Ms. Clark said she no longer works at IDPH, the OEIG recommends that IDPH consider whether to use her services as a temporary employee in the future, if that opportunity arises.

The OEIG recommends that IDPH take disciplinary action it deems appropriate relating to Mr. Willingham and that IDPH consider whether it is appropriate for Mr. Willingham to continue to hold a management or supervisory position.¹⁸

¹⁷ The OEIG concludes that an allegation is “[REDACTED]” when it has determined that there is reasonable cause to believe that a violation of law or policy has occurred, or that there has been fraud, waste, mismanagement, misconduct, nonfeasance, misfeasance, or malfeasance.

¹⁸ Mr. Willingham’s position is in the process of being converted from an exempt position to a Code-covered position. The hiring for that position has been paused during this investigation at the request of the OEIG.

Lastly, the OEIG also recommends that IDPH conduct training with all Division of Medical Cannabis staff regarding appropriate use of patient application materials and confidentiality.

No further investigative action is needed, and this case is considered closed.

Date: June 13, 2022

Office of Executive Inspector General
for the Agencies of the Illinois Governor
607 E. Adams Street, 14th Floor
Springfield, IL 62701

By: **Angela Luning**
Deputy Inspector General and Acting Chief

Mark Garst
Investigator

From: Dorando, Douglas [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 30, 2022 5:36 PM
To: Luning, Angela [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Extension Request -- OEIG #21-02509

Dear Ms. Luning:

Please consider this email a request for extension for the Illinois Department of Health (the "Department") to respond to the OEIG's Investigative Report #21-02509 ("Report"). The Department appreciates the OEIG's investigation and has acted swiftly in response to its findings. To date the Department has been working on implementing disciplinary measures within the medical cannabis program and one of the employees cited in the Report is no longer employed by the agency. The Department also takes the Report's encouragement for further investigation seriously to determine whether any additional employees in the Division were engaged in similar conduct, and we are presently undertaking that additional investigation, including interviews with other medical cannabis staff, to determine what other actions may need necessary. The Department will provide more detailed information in its full response but wanted to provide an interim update and request additional time in order to complete our investigation.

The Department respectfully requests a submission July 15, 2022. We greatly appreciate the additional time, and please feel free to contact me should you need anything further.

Very Truly Yours,

Douglas S. Dorando

Douglas S. Dorando | Deputy General Counsel & Ethics Officer
Division of Legal Services, Illinois Department of Public Health
535 W. Jefferson Street, Springfield, Illinois 62761
[REDACTED]

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July 15, 2022

**Re: Office of Executive Inspector General (OEIG) Complaint #21-02509
RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS IN FINAL SUMMARY REPORT**

Dear Ms. Haling:

The Illinois Department of Public Health (“IDPH” or “Department”) is in receipt of OEIG Complaint #21-02509 (“Report”) involving the medical cannabis program. Please consider this IDPH’s response to the OEIG’s report and initial implementation of its recommendations.

I. OEIG Report, Findings and Recommendations

The Report contains five [REDACTED], which include the OEIG’s determination that the Department’s Compassionate Use of Medical Cannabis staff violated the administrative rules related to the program and the State of Illinois Code of Personal Conduct, and ultimately mismanaged the program.

1. The OEIG recommended that IDPH take disciplinary action the Department deems appropriate related to office coordinators Ms. Marienella Rivera Rodriguez, Miguel Alocer Torres, and administrative assistant Grace Furlong.
2. The OEIG recommended that the IDPH consider whether to use Sabrina Clark’s services as a temporary employee in the future, if that opportunity arises.
3. The OEIG recommended that the IDPH take disciplinary action that the Department deems appropriate for Myles Willingham, Division Chief for the Compassionate Use of Medical Cannabis Program, and whether it’s appropriate for Mr. Willingham to continue to hold a management or supervisory position.
4. The OEIG recommended that the IDPH conduct training with all the Division of Medical Cannabis staff regarding the appropriate use of patient application materials and confidentiality.

II. IDPH Response to Report, Findings and Recommendations

IDPH has implemented discipline as it relates to all five employees identified as having engaged in misconduct in the Report. That discipline is presently pending, and will not be finalized for at least one month, at which point IDPH will supplement this response.

Immediately following receipt of the Report, IDPH placed Mr. Willingham on administrative leave pending further investigation. Pending further investigation, IDPH terminated his access to state e-mail, and all computer systems, files, and databases used for the medical cannabis

program. (Exhibit A). Mr. Willingham was presented a redacted copy of the Report, including the details of his specific conduct. Mr. Willingham resigned, and as a result, IDPH was unable to discuss the Report's findings or terminate Mr. Willingham's employment. (Exhibit B). IDPH management, including its ethics officer, spoke with Mr. Willingham's direct supervisor and the deputy director over the Office of Health Promotion, which houses the medical cannabis program. Neither Mr. Willingham's director supervisor nor the deputy director had any knowledge of Mr. Willingham's conduct.

With regard to the recommendations pertaining to the three office coordinators, and the administrative assistant, each employee was placed on administrative leaves of absence pending further investigation and were provided with pre-disciplinary notices, per the applicable Collective Bargaining Agreement, citing violations of the State of Illinois' Code of Professional Conduct and confidentiality regulations related to the Compassionate Use of Medical Cannabis Act. The Pre-Disciplinary notices indicate the Department is seeking discipline in the form of a fifteen-day unpaid suspension. (Exhibit C, D, E). All digital and physical access was suspended during their administrative leave. The temporary employee, Ms. Clark, no longer works in the medical cannabis program or the Department in general. Although IDPH did not have to take any further steps to remove her from its employment, IDPH did contact the temporary placement agency, Manpower, and notify its management to place Ms. Clark on a "do not assign/hire" list for IDPH based upon this conduct. (Exhibit F). The Department will supplement this response once the disciplinary process is completed.

In an effort to ensure proper training and sufficient knowledge of how to handle sensitive information, IDPH intends to conduct agency-wide trainings on the State of Illinois' Code of Professional Conduct and confidentiality relating to protected health information and personal identifiable information. Training will include overview of regulatory obligations to ensure the secure use, disclosure and storage of protected health information and personal identifiable information. All medical cannabis program employees will be required to attend this training. Employees will also be provided with relevant sensitivity training focusing on workplace culture and public trust.

Please note that in addition to the OEIG's investigation and Report, IDPH conducted additional investigation, including interviewing the remaining medical cannabis program staff to gauge further misconduct involving misuse of patient information, and the Office's policies, procedures, and training of employees. The OEIG's investigation involved five medical cannabis staff members out of the twelve current employees, and the Report encouraged IDPH to conduct a further investigation. In an effort to be thorough, IDPH management, including the ethics officer interviewed the remaining seven employees still in the medical cannabis office, including six additional medical cannabis application processors, and their supervising Public Service Administrator. Based upon these interviews, the IDPH management concluded that there was a significant breakdown in management and oversight allowing these events to occur, and a need for more robust standard operating procedures.

The investigatory interviews with processors revealed that none of these employees had participated in the medical cannabis "yearbook," or violated confidentiality provisions under the

medical cannabis program. As discussed above, the processors will also benefit from additional training.

IDPH, and its leadership, is committed to respecting its constituents and the confidentiality of patient data that is shared with it in order to provide necessary public health services to residents throughout the state

IDPH will continue to update the OEIG on its implementation of disciplinary action and training initiatives and appreciates the opportunity to provide this response. Should you have any further questions, please contact me at [REDACTED]

Sincerely,



Amaal V.E. Tokars
Acting Director, Illinois Department of Public Health

Exhibit A



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MEMORANDUM

To: Myles Willingham, Division Chief
Office of Health Promotion, Medical Cannabis

From: Robin Tucker, Deputy Director [REDACTED]
Office of Human Resources

Date: June 14, 2022

Re: Administrative Leave

This memorandum provides you with written notice that you are hereby placed on paid administrative leave effective today, June 14, 2022. This leave will remain in effect until further notice.

You must remain available by telephone during the workday hours of 8:30AM and 5:00PM for the entire duration of this paid administrative leave.

You are required to turn in all IDPH identification badges, keys, and State of Illinois equipment prior to your departure today. You must provide passwords for all State equipment upon turning them in as well. While on administrative leave, you will have no access to any IDPH systems, networks, or work locations. You should also refrain from contacting staff during this time. Should you have any questions, you are directed to contact your supervisor, [REDACTED].

If you have any additional questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the Office of Human Resources at [REDACTED].

CC:

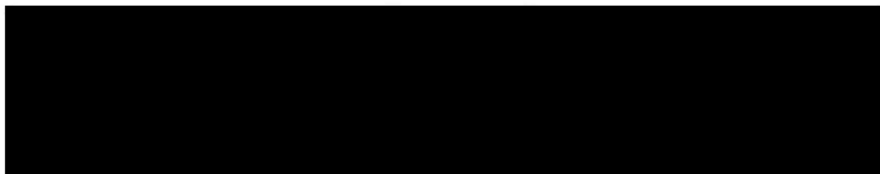


Exhibit B

From: [Tucker, Robin](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: [External] Resignation
Date: Thursday, June 16, 2022 5:43:20 PM

[REDACTED],

Below is the resignation notice I received from Myles Willingham this afternoon. [REDACTED], here's his contact info:

Myles Willingham
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Robin A. Tucker
Deputy Director, Office of Human Resources
Illinois Department of Public Health
535 W. Jefferson Street, 4th Floor
Springfield, IL 62761
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: Myles Willingham <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, June 16, 2022 4:01 PM
To: Tucker, Robin [REDACTED]
Subject: [External] Resignation

Robin,

Effective today, 16th of June 2022, I resign from my position as Division Chief of Medical Cannabis Patient Program at Illinois Department of Public Health. Thank you.

Myles J. Willingham
[REDACTED]

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Exhibit C

MEMORANDUM

Miguel Alcocer
Office Coordinator, SS2
Office of Health Promotion, Division of Medical Cannabis
Pre-Disciplinary Meeting: 6/21/2022
Rebuttal Received: 6/27/2022
Discipline Imposed: 15 Day (actual) Suspension
Effective date: 6/29/2022

In accordance with CMS Personnel Rule 302.640 Suspension Totalling Not More Than Thirty Days in any Twelve Month Period, Mr. Alcocer is being suspended fifteen (15) days (actual) effective 6/29/2022. The suspension will be served as a paper suspension and is being imposed for the following:

Conduct Unbecoming of a State Employee/Failure to Follow Rules and Procedures/Breach of Confidentiality

You demonstrated conduct unbecoming of a state employee, failure to follow rules and procedures and breach of confidentiality based on the following:

In 2021, you contributed to and promoted the collection of Medical Cannabis patients' photos for non-IDPH business related purposes. These photos were collected in a binder referred to as the "MCPH YEARBOOK" and were labeled with inappropriate and demeaning captions regarding the Medical Cannabis patients.

The above constitutes violation of the following:

- *IDPH Personal & Professional Conduct Directive (#16-06)*
- *State of Illinois Code of Personal Conduct*
- *Administrative Code Title 77: Public Health, Chapter I: Department of Public Health Subchapter u: Miscellaneous Programs and Services part 946 Compassionate Use of Medical Cannabis Pilot Program Section 946.60 Confidentiality*
- *Public Health (410 ILCS 130/) Compassionate Use of Medical Cannabis Program Act*

Continued misconduct may result in further progressive and corrective disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

[REDACTED]

CC: IDPH Labor Relations, AFSCME Representative

Exhibit D

MEMORANDUM

Grizelda (Grace) Furlong
Administrative Assistant I
Office of Health Promotion, Division of Medical Cannabis
Pre-Disciplinary Meeting: 6/21/2022
Rebuttal Received: 6/27/2022
Discipline Imposed: 10 Day (actual) Suspension
Effective date: 6/29/2022

In accordance with CMS Personnel Rule 302.640 Suspension Totaling Not More Than Thirty Days in any Twelve Month Period, Ms. Furlong is being suspended ten (10) days (actual) effective 6/29/2022. The suspension will be served as a paper suspension and is being imposed for the following:

Conduct Unbecoming of a State Employee

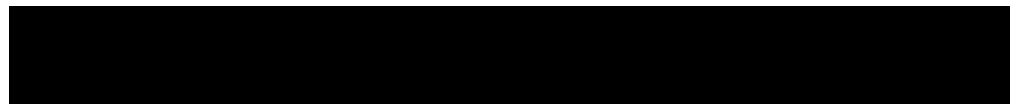
You demonstrated conduct unbecoming of a state employee based on the following:

In 2021, you promoted the collection of Medical Cannabis patients' photos for non-IDPH business related purposes. These photos were collected in a binder referred to as the "MCPD YEARBOOK" and were labeled with inappropriate and demeaning captions regarding the Medical Cannabis patients. Your conduct includes showing new staff the "MCPD YEARBOOK" and encouraging them to view it.

The above constitutes violation of the following:

- *IDPH Personal & Professional Conduct Directive (#16-06)*
- *State of Illinois Code of Personal Conduct*

Continued misconduct may result in further progressive and corrective disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.



CC: IDPH Labor Relations, AFSCME Representative, Personnel File

Exhibit E



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MEMORANDUM

Marianella Rivera-Rodriguez
Office Coordinator, SS
Office of Health Promotion, Division of Medical Cannabis
Pre-Disciplinary Meeting: 6/21/2022
Rebuttal Received: 6/27/2022
Discipline Imposed: 15 Day (actual) Suspension
Effective date: 6/29/2022

In accordance with CMS Personnel Rule 302.640 Suspension Totaling Not More Than Thirty Days in any Twelve Month Period, Ms. Rivera-Rodriguez is being suspended fifteen (15) days (actual) effective 6/29/2022. The suspension will be served as a paper suspension and is being imposed for the following:

Conduct Unbecoming of a State Employee/Failure to Follow Rules and Procedures/Breach of Confidentiality

You demonstrated conduct unbecoming of a state employee, failure to follow rules and procedures and breach of confidentiality based on the following:

In 2021, you contributed to and promoted the collection of Medical Cannabis patients' photos for non-IDPH business related purposes. These photos were collected in a binder referred to as the "MCPPE YEARBOOK" and were labeled with inappropriate and demeaning captions regarding the Medical Cannabis patients.

The above constitutes violation of the following:

- *IDPH Personal & Professional Conduct Directive (#16-06)*
- *State of Illinois Code of Personal Conduct*
- *Administrative Code Title 77: Public Health, Chapter I: Department of Public Health Subchapter u: Miscellaneous Programs and Services part 946 Compassionate Use of Medical Cannabis Pilot Program Section 946.60 Confidentiality*
- *Public Health (410 ILCS 130/) Compassionate Use of Medical Cannabis Program Act*

Continued misconduct may result in further progressive and corrective disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

[REDACTED]

CC: IDPH Labor Relations, AFSCME Representative

Exhibit F

From: [Tucker, Robin](#)
To: [Dorando, Douglas](#)
Subject: Fwd: No future temp services - S Clark OEIG Report - M. Willingham
Date: Thursday, June 16, 2022 10:55:52 PM

Action taken in response to OEIG Report...

Sent from Samsung Galaxy smartphone.
Get [Outlook for Android](#)

From: [REDACTED] >
Sent: Thursday, June 16, 2022 10:50:21 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Tucker, Robin [REDACTED]
Subject: No future temp services - S Clark

Hi [REDACTED],

I need to flag a prior Manpower temp that we had previously in Medical Cannabis. Her name was Sabrina Clark. We need to ensure that at no time is she allowed to come back to the Department as a temporary worker. This is related to an OEIG investigation.

Thank you!

[REDACTED]
IDPH~Labor Relations Administrator
535 W. Jefferson Street
Springfield, IL 62702

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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October 25, 2022

Susan M. Haling
Executive Inspector General
Via Email to [REDACTED]

**Re: Office of Executive Inspector General (OEIG) Complaint #21-02509
RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS IN FINAL SUMMARY REPORT**

Dear Ms. Haling:

This letter responds to your request for an update relative to the implementation of Recommendations as part of Investigation 21-02509 by the Department of Public Health (the "Department").

Regarding the Implementation of Discipline, the Department provides the following update by employee:

- Miguel Alcocer: Presently grieving his 15 day suspension for the following charges: Conduct Unbecoming of a State Employee/Failure to Follow Rules and Procedures/Breach of Confidentiality.
- Marianella Rivera-Rodriguez: Presently grieving her 15 day suspension for the following charges: Conduct Unbecoming of a State Employee/Failure to Follow Rules and Procedures/Breach of Confidentiality.
- Grace Furlong: Presently grieving her 10 day suspension for the following charges: Conduct Unbecoming of a State Employee.

AFSCME has consolidated these grievances into one, which has risen to Step Four.

Regarding implementation of additional training, as identified in the Department's initial response, the Department has identified available trainings through a master contract between "KnowBe4" and the Department of Information Technology, but the trainings are not yet available to the Department. Discussions related to access and scheduling are ongoing. In particular, the Department intends to utilize the following trainings, making them mandatory for all members of the Medical Cannabis Program:

- Handling Sensitive Information Securely Part 1
- Handling Sensitive Information Securely Part 2

- The What, Why, and How of HIPAA with Quiz
- Defining Types of Sensitive Information
- PII and You
- Data Privacy Basics

The Department is strongly considering expanding the requirement for such trainings more broadly throughout the entire agency.

The Department anticipates being able to supply another update to you once the grievance resolves, but should you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact our ethics officer, Douglas Dorando at [REDACTED].

Very Truly Yours,

[REDACTED]

Sameer Vohra, MD, JD, MA
Director



525-535 West Jefferson Street • Springfield, Illinois 62761-0001 • www.dph.illinois.gov

February 14, 2023

Susan M. Haling, Executive Inspector General

Via Electronic Mail: [REDACTED]

**Re: Office of Executive Inspector General (OEIG) Complaint #21-02509
DEPARTMENT'S FINAL RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS IN FINAL SUMMARY REPORT**

Dear Inspector General Haling:

This letter responds to your office's February 1, 2023 request for an update relative to the implementation of recommendations as part of Investigation 21-02509 by the Department of Public Health (the "Department").

As of February 2, 2023, the Department has been made aware that discipline has been finalized, following settlement of the consolidated grievances between AFSCME Council 31 and the Department of Central Management Services.

Regarding the Implementation of Discipline, the Department provides the following update by employee:

- **Miguel Alcocer:** His 15-day suspension for the following charges was reduced to a 10-day suspension: Conduct Unbecoming of a State Employee/Failure to Follow Rules and Procedures/Breach of Confidentiality. The suspension has already been served. The Department notes that he has also completed the following trainings imposed: "Handling Sensitive Information Securely" (Parts 1 & 2); "The What, Why, and How of HIPAA" with Quiz; "Defining Types of Sensitive Information"; "PII and You"; and "Data Privacy Basics".
- **Marianella Rivera-Rodriguez:** Her 15-day suspension for the following charges was reduced to a 10-day suspension: Conduct Unbecoming of a State Employee/Failure to Follow Rules and Procedures/Breach of Confidentiality. The suspension has already been served. The Department notes that she has also completed the following trainings imposed: "Handling Sensitive Information Securely" (Parts 1 & 2); "The What, Why, and How of HIPAA" with Quiz; "Defining Types of Sensitive Information"; "PII and You"; and "Data Privacy Basics".
- **Grace Furlong:** Her 10-day suspension for the following charges was reduced to a 5-day suspension: Conduct Unbecoming of a State Employee. The suspension has already been served. The Department notes that she has also completed the following trainings imposed: "Handling Sensitive Information Securely" (Parts 1 & 2); "The What, Why, and How of HIPAA" with Quiz; "Defining Types of Sensitive Information"; "PII and You"; and "Data Privacy Basics".

The Department continues to evaluate training and learning opportunities for IDPH employees to better understand privacy and professionalism standards, however at this time, the Department believes this concludes this investigation, but should you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact our ethics officer, Douglas Dorando at [REDACTED]

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Sameer Vohra, MD, JD, MA
Director

PUBLICATION OF REDACTED VERSION
OF THE OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE INSPECTOR GENERAL
FOR THE AGENCIES OF THE ILLINOIS GOVERNOR
INVESTIGATIVE REPORT


Case # 21-02509

Subject(s): Grizelda Furlong

RESPONDENT'S SUGGESTIONS FOR REDACTION / PUBLIC RESPONSE


Please check the appropriate line and sign and date below. If no line is checked, the Commission will not make your response public if the redacted report is made public.


- ☒ Below is my public response. Please make this response public if the summary report is also made public; or
- ☐ Below are my suggestions for redaction. I do not wish for these suggestions to be made public.


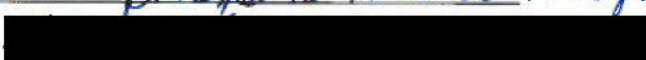


Respondent's Signature

3/22/2023
Date

Instructions: Please write or type suggestions for redaction or a public response on the lines below. If you prefer, you may attach separate documents to this form. Return this form and any attachments to:


Illinois Executive Ethics Commission
401 S. Spring Street, Room 513 Wm. Stratton Building
Springfield, IL 62706

in regard to this investigation - 


Additionally
this notebook was created prior to Mr. Williams' arrival to our Division. 


[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Looking now - it was in poor taste; however, since
Everyone in Medical Cannabis participated and
had knowledge and never complained to
[REDACTED], Mrs. Willingham or even
[REDACTED] - I was unaware this was an
issue. I did not create this Notebook.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] - [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] We as minorities
should not have been signaled out, and yet we were.
This investigation was a complete farce, since pertinent
people were never interviewed. This investigation was
targeted, not thorough. If it were HR IDPH would not
have needed to conduct their own investigation -
which poked holes in the OEIG investigation.

~~[REDACTED]~~